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Leave for Change: Lessons from Peru and Vietnam

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Leave for Change: Lessons from Peru and Vietnam

Lian Dumouchel, Stephanie Chaput, and Kelly Warnock, Thompson Rivers University, Canada

At your institution, how many faculty and staff would love the chance to travel overseas? How many have a passion for sharing their knowledge and skills with others? How many would jump at the opportunity to train colleagues in a developing country?

In this session, we will share about Leave for Change (L4C), a program for employees to volunteer three weeks of their vacation time in order to share their knowledge and skills with others in an international setting. Leave for Change is an initiative of Uniterra, one of Canada's largest international volunteer programs set up through World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and Centre d'étude et de coopération internationale /Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI).

Lian Dumouchel, the Director of Global Engagement at TRU will give an overview of how institutions can partner with Uniterra and the process for recruiting and selecting participants. The two inaugural participants will share how their experiences overseas impacted them both professionally and personally.

Stephanie Chaput, a biology lab faculty, volunteered in Lima, Peru helping to develop science curriculum for young girls and training science teachers with limited resources. Kelly Warnock, an instructional designer, trained faculty in at Vinh Long Community College in Vietnam, focusing on lesson plan design and educational technology.

Both volunteer placements offered unique challenges and opportunities, and resulted not only in capacity building in the developing countries but also new perspectives gained about common teaching challenges, connecting with colleagues in a communities of practice, as well as addressing issues of poverty and equity.

If you or your colleagues would be interested in volunteering overseas, come to this session to find out how your institution can get involved and support employees to Leave for Change!